

Enhancing Access to and Success in Post-School Education and Training, for the Future World of Work

Developing Assessments and Assessment Instruments for Skills Programmes



INTRODUCTION

According to the QCTO Assessment Policy the objective of assessment is to promote the development and implementation of (final) assessments which should yield the following:

- A reliable indication of learner achievements;
- A consistent indication of a level of attainment between comparable assessments; and
- A promotion of confidence in the achievement of qualifications registered on the OQSF

A GUIDE TO ASSESSING LEARNERS

- Assessments must be consistent with the purpose, outcomes, and assessment criteria found in the Skills Programme and the Curriculum documents.
- Assessment should help learners to learn, understand and apply their knowledge in various work situations.
- Variety in the types of assessment allows for a range of different learning outcomes to be achieved, e.g.
 - Assessment methods used may be written or practical, formative (continuous) or summative (at the end);
 - Different assessment instruments could be used, e.g.
 - tests assessed using a marking memo;
 - posters, interviews, projects, presentations, briefs, scenarios, etc.—
 - Practical demonstrations/presentations - best assessed using a rubric
- Learners need to understand clearly what evidence must they provide in assessment tasks to prove competency.
- The standards for the development of continuous assessments (formative assessments) and for the final assessment (FISA) are set in the Skills Programme Document and should be implemented accordingly by the facilitator.
- The appropriate use of all Assessment Criteria will take the learner on a journey towards proving competency in the FISA

RECOMMENDED STEPS TO DEVELOPING ASSESSMENTS INSTRUMENTS

- Gathering resources
- Creating a framework or planning grid
- Structuring and laying out of the assessment instrument
- Putting together an assessment instrument
- Assessment of the instrument

GATHERING RESOURCES

- Curriculum document
- SP document
- Textbooks/learning material
- Previous assessment instruments
- Previous moderation reports

CREATING A FRAMEWORK OR PLANNING GRID

- Decide on the content and concepts/skills to be assessed
- Plan the cognitive level of each question
- Decide on mark allocation for each question
- Decide on the duration or length of the assessment

STRUCTURING AND LAYING OUT OF THE ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT

- The SP document should assist in determining aspects of the instruments, including:
 - The format/method of the assessment
 - The weighting of the content in the assessment.
 - Pass mark/the competency required.
 - Areas that are mandatory to be competent in.

PUTTING TOGETHER AN ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT

- Structure the assessment instrument as planned – will the instrument have:
 - ❖ choice questions?
 - ❖ different sections?
 - ❖ source material, addenda, annexures, maps, formula sheets, etc
- Assess the identified content and apply the cognitive levels decided upon.
- Develop the assessment instrument and the memorandum/marking guideline at the same time.
- Develop the cover page and instructions for the assessment instrument.
- Assess the instrument against the criteria for an assessment instrument.
- Submit the assessment instrument for moderation.

CRITERIA FOR PUTTING TOGETHER AN ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT

- Content coverage
- Cognitive levels/demands/skills
- Text selection, types and quality of questions
- Language and ambiguity
- Accuracy and reliability of marking guidelines

CONTENT COVERAGE

- Does the assessment instrument adequately cover the skills and concepts/topics/themes as prescribed in the SP document.
- Are the questions within the broad scope of the ELOs of the SP.
- Are the skills/topics/themes and concepts appropriately linked and integrated.
- Are the questions representative of the latest developments in the SP.
- Is the content including examples, text and illustrations included in the assessment instrument suitable, appropriate, relevant and academically correct/accurate.

COGNITIVE LEVELS/DEMANDS/SKILLS

- A quality assessment instrument is characterised by, amongst other things, the inclusion of questions of a wide range of cognitive demand and difficulty levels so as to assess the various levels of achievement.
- Cognitive levels are useful for:
 - ✓ Ensuring that assessment instruments are not dominated by questions that require reproduction of basic information, or replication of basic procedures.
 - ✓ Providing a framework for extending assessment inventories beyond factual recall and routine procedures.
- The assessor should ensure that there is an appropriate distribution in terms of cognitive demand as prescribed in the SP document.

TEXT SELECTION, TYPES AND QUALITY OF QUESTIONS

- The assessment instrument includes questions of appropriate types for the SP, e.g. multiple-choice, data/source-based response, essay, real-life scenario and real-life problem-solving questions
- The source material (i.e. text, visuals, drawings, illustrations, examples, tables, graphs, data files): is SP specific; is of an appropriate length; allows for the testing of appropriate skills; and generates questions across the cognitive levels.
- References in questions to texts, visuals, drawings, illustrations, examples, tables, graphs, are relevant and correct.
- The options of MCQ: follow grammatically from the stem; are free from logical cues that make one of the options an obvious choice; are free from such absolute terms as “always” or “never”; are of approximately the same length, with the correct answer not being longer, shorter, more specific, or more complete than other options; etc. The correct answer does not include elements in common with other options.

LANGUAGE AND AMBIGUITY

- The language used in the assessment instrument is grammatically correct
 - Keep language simple;
 - Be specific – do not expect candidates to read between the lines; and
 - Use SP-specific and commonly-used words/terminology
- The questions do not contain over-complicated syntax.
- The language, register, and the level and complexity of the vocabulary are appropriate for the NQF level of the SP.
- There is no evidence of bias in the assessment instrument in respect of culture, gender, language, politics, race, religion, stereotyping, area of residence, etc.

ACCURACY AND RELIABILITY OF MARKING

GUIDELINES

- The answers in the marking guideline are all correct in terms of the SP.
- The marking guideline is complete, showing mark allocation and mark distribution within each of the questions.
- The marking guideline provides enough detail to ensure the reliability of marking.
- The marking guideline makes allowance for relevant/correct alternative responses.
- The marking guideline uses rubrics where appropriate.

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Thank you

